

Can a hardcore bodybuilder workout once a week and still be strong and fit

A hardcore bodybuilder who is used to high training frequency and volume would likely experience a step back in maximal muscle growth and performance if switching to just one workout per week. However, research shows that even a single, high-intensity, full-body workout per week can preserve most muscle gains and maintain a high level of strength for an extended period, especially for those who are already well-trained^{[1] [2] [3]}.

Key Points:

- **Strength and Muscle Maintenance:** Training once a week can maintain strength and muscle mass for most individuals, including those who have previously trained more frequently. Studies indicate that once-a-week full-body training is sufficient to preserve almost all muscle and strength gains made during prior training phases^{[2] [1] [3]}.
- **Muscle Growth:** For maximal hypertrophy (muscle growth), higher frequency (2–4 times per week per muscle group) is generally considered optimal^{[4] [5]}. Training once a week may slow or halt new muscle growth, but it won't cause rapid loss of existing muscle if intensity and volume within the session are adequate^{[6] [7]}.
- **Performance:** A hardcore bodybuilder would likely notice a decline in workout capacity, recovery between sets, and possibly some loss in muscle detail or endurance if they reduced frequency to once per week, but raw strength can be maintained^{[5] [3]}.
- **Practical Considerations:** If time constraints or lifestyle require a single weekly session, focusing on high-intensity, compound movements with sufficient volume can keep a bodybuilder strong and fit, though not at their peak performance or muscle mass^{[1] [3] [6]}.

Summary Table

Training Frequency	Strength Gains	Muscle Maintenance	Muscle Growth	Practicality for Hardcore Bodybuilders
1x/week	Maintains	Maintains	Limited	Feasible, but not optimal
2–4x/week	Increases	Maintains/Increases	Increases	Optimal for growth and performance

Conclusion:

A hardcore bodybuilder can remain strong and fit with just one hard workout per week, especially if the session is intense and covers the whole body. However, for maximal muscle growth and performance, higher frequency is preferable^{[1] [3] [2]}. Once-a-week training is best seen as a maintenance or fallback strategy, not a path to new gains.

1. <https://www.menshealth.com/uk/building-muscle/train-smarter/a62733479/one-workout-per-week/>
2. <https://barbend.com/maintain-your-gains-by-training-only-once-per-week/>
3. <https://fitbod.me/blog/lifting-once-per-week/>
4. https://www.reddit.com/r/bodyweightfitness/comments/13f0cua/train_only_once_a_week_effectiveness/
5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hw5w2r6BLF4>
6. <https://barbend.com/bodybuilding-workout-once-per-week/>
7. <https://www.livestrong.com/article/341757-can-you-build-muscle-by-working-out-once-a-week/>